

**From:** Bediako George  
**To:** Microsoft ATR  
**Date:** 1/23/02 4:58pm  
**Subject:** Microsoft Settlement

Dear Mz. Hesse and to whom it may concern,

My name is Bediako George and I am a developer of server side applications using a variety of languages on a variety of operating systems. I currently make my living working for a small start up in the D.C. Metropolitan area.

Like most people in the software industry I have been following the saga of the Microsoft Antitrust case with great interest. I believe I have a lot of background knowledge as to the particulars concerning this case. I also have a very good understanding of operating systems, large application development, proprietary software manufacturing, and open source development.

I am writing to express my dissatisfaction with the current proposal to allow Microsoft to pay for it's past indiscretions by provided "free" software to schools. I fail to understand how this punishes Microsoft for the following reasons:

1> Software has a massive initial development cost associated with its creation. After this initial cost the price for creating a new copy is minimal if not negligible. In fact it could be equated to the price of copying the software to a popular form of persistent media (A compact disk for instance). To allow Microsoft to "get of the hook" for the mere cost of a several hundred thousand CDs and equate this to the market value of their software is silly.

2> This "punishment" only serves to increase Microsoft's stranglehold on the operating system and applications business. By allowing Microsoft to grant their software to schools you are shutting out other legitimate software vendors, thus further choking the desktop software market.

3> Any secondary goal involving teaching computers science to children to facilate technical learning in our schools will not be achieved. Largely because Microsoft's proprietary operating system OS is a secret. In much the same way as you would not expect a auto mechanic apprentice to learn about engines on Ford motor car with it's hood welded shut, you would not expect students to learn about application development with closed, secretive proprietary code. Since the source code of Microsoft's operating system is a secret, students will not be able to learn about the inner workings of an OS.

For these reasons I think the proposed settlement is a bad idea.

There has been much arguing back and forth about what Microsoft should do.

After much thought on this matter I have come to the conclusion that there is really only one way to punish Microsoft and make sure it doesn't happen again. Here is my suggestion:

1> Require Microsoft to pay a fine of 1 billion dollars. This fine should be viewed as a fine and not as a donation. In other words Microsoft should not be allowed to use this fine payment as a public relations advantage. When the fine is paid the money could then be donated to the schools or something equally worthwhile.

2> Require Microsoft to expose the META language surrounding it's Word and Excel document formats. Require Microsoft to publish proposed changes to its format immediately.

I think the combination of these two points will sufficiently punish Microsoft for it's past indiscretions as well ensure that it's monopolistic behaviour does not continue in the future.

Regards,

Bediako George  
Software Developer

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